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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Denver public schools' Standards of Excellence Program, a research-based means of developing and implementing school improvements while reinforcing existing practices characteristic of effective schools. Researchers have identified four indicators of school effectiveness that can be observed, measured, controlled, and remediated: school processes, classroom actions, administrative leadership, and expectations. A dynamic combination of all four factors is present in effective schools. Accordingly, in 1983, the Denver Public Schools Staff Academy developed modules for teaching Standards of Excellence, to be used by principals in familiarizing their staffs with research into effective schools. After the teaching modules are presented, the staff completes assessment instruments to determine which characteristics of effective schools need to be strengthened, in what way, and to what ends. Thereafter, Standards for Excellence recommends that a committee be formed to examine assessment data in order to develop a plan of action for school improvement and a timeline for implementation. Improvements associated with this project have already been shown in the areas of standardized test results, pupil suspension rates, and attendance. (TE)

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PRESENTATION: STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE: A BLUEPRINT FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

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Standards of Excellence Abstract

The Denver Public Schools has translated powerful research-identified school characteristics into a unique plan of action. **Standards of Excellence** is a means of developing and implementing positive change while reinforcing existing practices characteristic of effective schools.

Unlike earlier research which strongly linked academic outcomes to a student's family background, recent findings indicate that schools can make a tremendous difference in student achievement. Researchers examining effective schools found identifiable characteristics which can be observed, measured, controlled, and most importantly, remediated.

These characteristics can be grouped into four categories: school processes, classroom actions, administrative leadership, and expectations. A dynamic combination of all four factors is present in effective schools. Their cumulative effect is greater than the effect of any individual factor.

In 1983, the Denver Public Schools Staff Academy developed modules for teaching **Standards of Excellence**. These modules were designed to be used by principals in familiarizing their staffs with research into effective schools. After the teaching modules are presented, assessment instruments are completed by the staff. It is important that they determine which of the distinguishing characteristics of effective schools need to be strengthened--in what ways and to what ends.

If change is to be effective and meaningful, it should evolve from a team effort. **Standards of Excellence** suggests a committee be formed early in the process of increasing school effectiveness. Its composition may vary from school to school, but its chief task is directing long-range planning for increasing school effectiveness after examining assessment data.

The plan for improvement may vary according to need but contains common elements, including the examination of as many remedial alternatives as possible, the selection of the alternative most appropriate for the school and most readily acceptable to the staff, and the identification of resources that may be needed for remediation.

Once staff consensus has been reached about the plan for action, a time line is developed for implementation of the plan. Because change may be required of staff members, communication must be direct and personal to alleviate their concerns.

Improvements associated with this project have already been shown in the areas of standardized test results, pupil suspension rates, and attendance. Gains in the standardized test results have been particularly impressive. Denver's second and fifth grade students scored well above the national norms on the recently completed Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills.

Standards of Excellence is the unique plan of action which made these remarkable gains possible. Based on dynamic, research-identified school characteristics, **Standards of Excellence** is a means of developing and implementing positive change while reinforcing existing practices characteristic of effective schools.

STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE PRESENTATION

THE DISTRICT

WE ARE HERE THIS EVENING REPRESENTING THE DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN DENVER, COLORADO. THE DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS UNIQUE IN THAT THE CITY, COUNTY, AND SCHOOL DISTRICT HAVE THE SAME GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES. THE DISTRICT WHICH WAS INCORPORATED IN 1902 NOW HAS OVER 61,000 STUDENTS AND 3,600 TEACHERS. OF THE 109 SCHOOLS, THERE ARE 82 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ARE THE SCHOOLS IN WHICH THE PROGRAM WE ARE DESCRIBING TO YOU THIS EVENING WAS PLANNED AND IMPLEMENTED. THE BUDGET FOR THE DISTRICT ENCOMPASSES 295 MILLION OF WHICH OVER 90 MILLION IS ALLOCATED FOR THE OPERATION OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. NATURALLY, WITH INFLATION AND PERIODS OF DECLINING ENROLLMENT, WE STILL SUFFER FROM DWINDLING FINANCIAL RESOURCES JUST LIKE OTHER DISTRICTS. A WIDE VARIETY OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO OUR COMMUNITY INCLUDING A MOUNTAIN OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE PURPOSES OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION AND SURVIVAL TRAINING.

WE FEEL THAT WE CONTINUE TO UPHOLD A SOLID REPUTATION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION, BUT, AT THE INCEPTION OF THE **STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM**, IT WAS FELT THAT WE NEEDED DIRECTION TO UNIFY THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WITH A FOCUS ON CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY. IN PARTICULAR, OUR PRIMARY FOCUS WOULD ULTIMATELY BE THAT THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION A CHILD RECEIVED IN OUR SCHOOLS WOULD NOT BE AN ACCIDENT OF CITY GEOGRAPHY. **THE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM** WAS THAT PROGRAM WHICH ENCOMPASSED DIRECTION AND SUPPORT FOR IMPROVED EDUCATION OF STUDENTS IN 82 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

DEVELOPING THE MODEL

RESEARCH INTO SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS FALLS GENERALLY INTO TWO CATEGORIES: ONE CATEGORY LINKS ACADEMIC OUTCOMES TO STUDENT FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS SUCH AS INCOME LEVEL AND ETHNICITY; ANOTHER BODY OF RESEARCH VIEWS SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AS THE PRINCIPLE DETERMINANTS OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. WHILE THE FIRST GROUP OF STUDIES STATE THE PRIMARY REASON FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IS PUPIL AND PARENT CHARACTERISTICS, THE SECOND HOLDS SCHOOLS AND THEIR STAFFS ACCOUNTABLE FOR INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES.

IN THE FIRST GROUP OF STUDIES, THE STUDENTS ARRIVE AT THE SCHOOL DOOR ALREADY POSSESSING CHARACTERISTICS PREDICTING SCHOOL SUCCESS.

THOUGH IT IS PROBABLE THAT FAMILY BACKGROUND IS IMPORTANT IN DEVELOPING A STUDENT'S CHARACTER, PERSONALITY, AND INTELLIGENCE, IT IS NOT REALISTIC THAT A STUDENT'S FAMILY BACKGROUND CAN BE ALTERED BY THE SCHOOLS. THIS, COUPLED WITH THE EXISTENCE OF SCHOOLS THAT ARE SUCCESSFUL REGARDLESS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS, HAS LED MANY RESEARCHERS TO EXPLORE SCHOOL FACTORS WHICH MIGHT RELATE TO ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS. SUCH STUDIES TYPICALLY BEGIN BY EXAMINING URBAN SCHOOLS WHICH ARE EFFECTIVE AND COMPARING THEM TO INEFFECTIVE SCHOOLS WITH ANALOGOUS STUDENT POPULATIONS. WHEN EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS ARE FOUND TO EXIST ALONGSIDE INEFFECTIVE ONES, AFTER STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS HAVE BEEN CONTROLLED, RESEARCHERS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT DIFFERENCES IN PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT CANNOT BE EXPLAINED AWAY BY STUDENT'S FAMILY BACKGROUND, BUT RATHER RESIDE IN THE NATURE OF THE SCHOOLS THEMSELVES. RUTTER'S FIFTEEN THOUSAND

HOURS: SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON CHILDREN AND EDMONDS' IN SEARCH OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS ARE TWO PROMINENT STUDIES ILLUSTRATING THE LINK BETWEEN THE SCHOOL'S CHARACTERISTICS AND ACHIEVEMENT. LATER RESEARCH STUDIES SUGGEST THAT 47% OF THE VARIABLES AFFECTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT ON STANDARDIZED TESTS ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE HOME WITH THE SCHOOL MAKING UP THE OTHER 53%. THUS, WE HAVE AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

GRADUALLY, RESEARCHERS ARE IDENTIFYING SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS WHICH SEEM TO AFFECT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AS MEASURED BY STANDARDIZED TESTS. ACHIEVEMENT SCORE GAINS, ALTHOUGH A SIGNIFICANT MEASURE OF SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS, ARE NOT PARTICULARLY VISIBLE WHEN SOMEONE ENTERS THE SCHOOL BUILDING. OTHER INDICATIONS OF EXCELLENCE AND EXCEPTIONALITY THAT HAVE BEEN USED ARE HIGH ATTENDANCE RATES AND LOW RATES OF VIOLENCE, AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION.

SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, AND PRINCIPALS DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AND THAT DIFFERENCE CAN BE CATEGORIZED INTO AREAS WHICH CONSIST OF 1) OBSERVABLE, 2) MEASURABLE, AND 3) REMEDIABLE CHARACTERISTICS. THOSE CHARACTERISTICS ARE INTERRELATED AND DIRECTLY AFFECT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS IN SCHOOL.

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS' ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS EMBARKED ON AN AMBITIOUS ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION OFFERED TO DISTRICT STUDENTS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESEARCH-BASED ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE THEIR SCHOOLS. WE REJECTED THE PREMISE THAT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IS ONLY

DETERMINED BY FAMILY, ECONOMIC, AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND. RATHER, WE CONCENTRATED ON LOOKING AT RESEARCH THAT DEMONSTRATES SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOLS THAT ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. THESE CHARACTERISTICS CAN BE GROUPED UNDER FOUR CATEGORIES: 1) SCHOOL PROCESSES, 2) CLASSROOM ACTIONS, 3) ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP, AND 4) EXPECTATIONS. WE DEVELOPED AN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM BASED ON THIS RESEARCH TITLED, **STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE**. THIS PROGRAM HAS THREE PRIMARY COMPONENTS: 1) TRAINING BUILDING PRINCIPALS IN THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS, AND HOW TO TEACH STAFF ABOUT THESE CHARACTERISTICS; 2) DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SCHOOL; AND 3) IMPLEMENTING, MONITORING, AND EVALUATING THAT PLAN.

WHILE WE KNOW THAT NO SINGLE INNOVATION OR INTERVENTION WILL CONSISTENTLY AND UNAMBIGUOUSLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN STUDENT OUTCOMES, THE RESEARCH SHOWS US THAT A COMBINATION OF CHARACTERISTICS FOUND IN EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESS.

THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS DATA ADD TO THE INCREASINGLY RICH WEB OF RESEARCH ON THE PROCESS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING FURNISHING A NEW CONTEXT FOR THINKING ABOUT THE SCHOOL AS A TOTAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. WE KNOW WHAT WE NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS. THERE IS MUCH LESS CLARITY, HOWEVER, ABOUT HOW TO DO IT. THE NEED FOR RESEARCH TO REFINE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING, AND EXPLORE THE COGNITIVE BASES FOR LEARNING IS AS GREAT AS EVER.

OUR PURPOSE THIS EVENING IS FOR US TO COME TOGETHER IN A FRAMEWORK OF COLLEGIAL SHARING OF OUR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS USING THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS RESEARCH AS A BLUEPRINT FOR THAT EFFORT. WE ARE NOT HERE THIS EVENING TO ARGUE THE ACCELERATING OR DEACCELERATING FACTORS OF ANY OF THE SINGULAR COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS RESEARCH OR HOW WE IMPLEMENTED THEM. AGAIN, OUR EFFORT THIS EVENING WILL BE GEARED TO OUR OVERALL ENDEAVOR TO IMPROVE URBAN SCHOOLS THROUGH THE EYES OF CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION, THE BUILDING PRINCIPAL, AND CLASSROOM TEACHER.

THE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE RESEARCH-MODEL IS BASED ON THE RESEARCH DESCRIPTIONS BY BROPHY, GOOD, EVERTSON, ROSENSHINE, RUTTER, EDMONDS, STALLINGS, AND KOSOVICH, AND OTHERS.

THESE CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD BE FOUND IN ALL SCHOOLS SINCE THEY ARE CRITICAL TO THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS. THESE INVENTORY OF CHARACTERISTICS MAY BE USED TO IDENTIFY SCHOOLWIDE CHARACTERISTICS WHICH HELP TO ASSESS SCHOOL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES. SUCH CHARACTERISTICS ARE MANAGEABLE BY EDUCATORS AND CAN BE EVALUATED TO ASSESS SPECIFIC RESULTS. THESE CHARACTERISTICS HAVE BEEN FOUND TO BE TOTALLY OR PARTIALLY ABSENT FROM INEFFECTIVE SCHOOLS. <u>IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS, THESE CHARACTERISTICS ARE FOUND IN DYNAMIC COMBINATIONS</u>.

FINALLY, THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS ARE VIEWED FROM AN OPERATIONAL POINT OF VIEW WHICH, WHEN IN PLACE, SHOULD ENSURE EQUITY AND QUALITY. REMEMBER, THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION A CHILD RECEIVES SHOULD NOT BE AN ACCIDENT OF CITY GEOGRAPHY.

WE CATALOGUED FROM THE RESEARCH SEVEN MAJOR ATTRIBUTES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PROCESSES: DEVELOPING AND UNIFYING CURRICULUM OR THE ABILITY TO FUNCTION AS A WHOLE. SCHOOLS WHICH HAVE SHARED COMMON GOALS ARE MORE EFFECTIVE, THE STAFF COOPERATIVELY PLANS AND DEVELOPS THE CURRICULUM TO ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS. IT ALSO HAS A FAR REACHING EFFECT ON DISTRICTWIDE EFFECTS AS WELL. THE OTHER SIX ATTRIBUTES WERE IDENTIFIED AS:

1. ESTABLISH A DISCIPLINE CODE.
2. STRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES.
3. OBTAIN CONSENSUS ON SCHOOL GOALS.
4. MONITOR ATTAINMENT OF SCHOOL GOALS.
5. REWARD STUDENT PROGRESS.
6. MODEL BEHAVIORS CONSISTENT WITH GOALS.

WITH CLASSROOM ACTIONS IDENTIFIED AS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS - EFFECTIVE TEACHERS WERE IDENTIFIED. CORA AND KAREN WILL DISCUSS MANY OF THESE IN THEIR PRESENTATIONS, HOWEVER, THERE WAS A TOTAL DISTRICT EFFORT TOWARD ONE OF THE NINETEEN: USING DIRECT INSTRUCTION. THE DENVER MODEL OF MASTERY LEARNING SERVED AS A MAJOR EMPHASIS. HERE IT WAS THAT WE FELT WE COULD NOT ASSUME THAT JUST BECAUSE IT IS IN OUR CURRICULUM, IT IS TAUGHT AND JUST BECAUSE IT IS TAUGHT, IT IS LEARNED. WE DID NOT WANT TO WISH OUR KIDS HAVE MASTERY--WE NEEDED TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE--WE WANTED A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM THAT WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE EMPHASIS WAS ON LEARNING PROVEN--NOT TEACHING DONE.

WE ALSO DISCOVERED SEVEN ATTRIBUTES OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP. EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATORS WILL:

1. FOSTER PROCESSES AND BELIEFS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS.
2. OBSERVE CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND CONFER WITH TEACHERS.
3. ENCOURAGE STAFF DEVELOPMENT.
4. ORGANIZE AND EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTE RESOURCES.
5. SEEK SUPPORT RESOURCES.
6. INSURE SHARED DECISION MAKING.
7. PROVIDE A SAFE, ORDERLY, CLEAN ENVIRONMENT.

THIS WAS A MAJOR MARKETING CONCERN--PEOPLE APPEAR TO AUTOMATICALLY BELIEVE THE WORST ABOUT URBAN SCHOOLS. OUR TOTAL ELEMENTARY FOCUS CENTERED AROUND A SAFE, CLEAN, CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE SCHOOL: (DIGNITY TO WORK) (PLANTS) (CHILDREN'S WORK) (CLEAN AND PLEASANT ENVIRONMENT) (YOUR BUILDING IS A QUALITY INDICATOR OF YOUR LEADERSHIP) (HOW CAN WE CARE ABOUT KIDS IF WE DON'T CARE FOR EXEMPLARY MANAGEMENT OF FACILITIES) AND THIS GOES RIGHT DOWN TO THE BOILER ROOM.

THE FOURTH MAJOR AREA OF EMPHASIS UNDER THE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE BANNER CAME UNDER THE HEADING OF EXPECTATIONS WITH THREE ATTRIBUTES OF

1. EXPECT SUCCESS.
2. EMPHASIZE BASIC SKILLS.
3. EXPECT PURPOSEFUL STUDENT BEHAVIORS WHICH LEAD TO ACHIEVEMENT.

PROBABLY, THE MOST POWERFUL DRIVING FORCE OF ALL THE ATTRIBUTES AND QUALITY INDICATORS WAS THE TOTAL PUSH THAT ALL OUR KIDS CAN LEARN. A BELIEF SYSTEM THAT IF THEY

DIDN'T LEARN, WE WOULD EXAMINE OURSELVES, NOT OUR STUDENTS--NOT OUR PRODUCT--WE FELT WE SHOULDN'T BLAME OUR PRODUCT FOR OUR FAILURES. AND YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVERYBODY STARTS TALKING ABOUT THE FACT THAT ALL KIDS CAN LEARN--JUST ABOUT ALL OF THE KIDS DO SHOW INSTRUCTIONAL GROWTH. AND THEN DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS? THEY COME TO SCHOOL MORE OFTEN, BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS DECLINE, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, THEY FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES. IT HAS BEEN SAID: WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT, WHAT A CHILD KNOWS OR THE KIND OF PERSON HE OR SHE BECOMES.

AND FINALLY, STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

BUT IF THE NEW RESEARCH ON SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS HOLDS ANY SPECIAL PROMISE FOR TRANSFORMING ACTUAL PRACTICE, IT LIES IN THE STRAIGHTFORWARD EFFORT TO REVIVE FEELINGS OF OPTIMISM AMONG SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND CLASSROOM TEACHERS, AND TO ENCOURAGE A NEW SENSE OF EFFICACY AND PURPOSE IN EDUCATION.

WE FELT THAT SCHOOLS MUST EMPHASIZE HIGH AND UNIFORM STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT BUT ADOPT MULTIPLE STRATEGIES IN RESPONSE TO THEIR PARTICULAR NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES. EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS MUST IDENTIFY AND ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR OWN EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS WHILE ACTING FIRMLY ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT BETTER SOLUTIONS CAN INDEED BE FOUND. WHEN THIS HAPPENS, SCHOOLS CONSISTENTLY COMMUNICATE TO STAFF, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS THAT THEY ARE PLACES FOR LEARNING, AND INSIST THAT THIS COMMITMENT BE MANIFEST IN EVERY CLASSROOM.

IN YOUR HANDOUTS IS A FULL DISCLOSURE OF OUR FINAL TEST RESULTS USING STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS. HOWEVER, WE FELT THAT WE SHOULD ALSO TAKE A MORE INDIVIDUAL LOOK WITH CRITERION-REFERENCE TESTS AS WELL. DESCRIBE ALPAS. A SYSTEM CALLED: ACADEMIC LEARNING PROGRESS ASSESSMENT SYSTEM WAS DEVELOPED TO MEASURE THE SKILL ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN EVERY FIVE WEEKS IN READING, LANGUAGE, AND MATHEMATICS. THE RESULTS ARE REPORTED TO PARENTS WITH A CLASS AND INDIVIDUAL PROFILE PRINTED FOR EACH TEACHER. THIS SERVES TO DIAGNOSE BEFORE INSTRUCTION IS OFFERED AS WELL.

THE MOST IMPORTANT FOCUS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT WAS AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE STUDENTS IN THE FIRST QUARTILE ON STANDARDIZED TESTS.

THE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT ACROSS SOCIO-ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, LANGUAGE, AND ETHNIC BOUNDARIES WAS OUR PRIMARY CONSIDERATION. WE ALSO FOUND THAT WHEN ATTENTION WAS APPLIED TO STUDENTS NORMALLY FOUND AT THIS LEVEL THAT STUDENTS IMPROVED DYNAMICALLY AT THE MEDIAN AND THIRD QUARTILE LEVEL AS WELL.

PRINCIPAL TRAINING

TRAINING AND SUPPORT WERE ESSENTIAL TO IMPLEMENT THE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM IN THE DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS, THE DISTRICT'S STAFF ACADEMY DEVELOPED FOR US A SEVEN-UNIT INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGE CONTAINING ALL OF THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS RESEARCH UNDER SEVERAL TRAINING MODULES. THIS TRAINING WAS FIRST PRESENTED TO BUILDING PRINCIPALS ON A MONTHLY BASIS AND THEY, IN TURN, PRESENTED IT AT MONTHLY

STAFF MEETINGS. OVER SIXTY HOURS OF TRAINING WAS PROVIDED DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS IN 1) ESR, 2) MASTERY LEARNING, 3) INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES, 4) INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION.

STRUCTURE AND POLICY SUPPORT

POLICY SUPPORT BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTED IN A DISTRICTWIDE POLICY ON HOMEWORK WHICH REQUIRES MINIMUM AMOUNTS OF TIME FOR REGULAR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS AT EACH GRADE LEVEL. FROM 10-15 MINUTES, ONE OR TWO DAYS PER WEEK IN KINDERGARTEN TO 30 MINUTES, FOUR DAYS PER WEEK AT GRADE SIX.

A DISTRICTWIDE BOARD OF EDUCATION GOAL TO IMPROVE ALL STUDENTS NORMALLY FOUND AT THE FIRST QUARTILE LEVEL ON STANDARDIZED TESTS AND A BOARD POLICY ON RAISING THE PROMOTIONAL STANDARDS REQUIREMENTS OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS ALSO PROVIDED SUPPORT FOR THE EFFORTS OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS.

ASSISTANCE WAS ALSO PROVIDED PRINCIPALS THROUGH REGULAR DISCUSSIONS AND TRAINING IN ADMINISTRATIVE MEETINGS WITH THE ABSENCE OF REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS.

ANOTHER KIND OF SUPPORT IS NECESSARY HERE TOO. AND IT STARTS AT THE TOP AND GOES ALL THE WAY THROUGH COLLEGIAL SHARING OF PRINCIPALS WHO NEED HELP. PRINCIPALS WERE ASKED TO BE IN THE CLASSROOMS MORE FREQUENTLY AS WELL AND THIS INCLUDED THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS' STAFF.

THROUGH THE HELP AND COMMITMENT OF TEACHERS, PARENTS, BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS, AND ADMINISTRATORS, WE WERE ABLE TO:

- DECREASE OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS,
- INCREASE THE DAILY ATTENDANCE OF STUDENTS DISTRICTWIDE ABOVE 91%,
- IMPROVE THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOLS DISTRICTWIDE,
- DEFINITELY IMPROVE THE BASIC SKILLS OF STUDENTS WITH A SECONDARY COMPONENT OF IMPROVED INDIVIDUAL SKILLS OF STUDENTS.

AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OVER 15 YEARS, AN INCREASE OF OVER 500 STUDENTS WERE DOCUMENTED FROM PRIVATE SCHOOLS NOT INCLUDING KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS.

AND NOW, MAY I PRESENT DR. KAREN CAMPBELL FOR: THE STORY IN THE BUILDING.